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**30 INDIVIDUALS CHARGED WITH DEFRAUDING
NEW YORK'S SECTION 8 HOUSING SUBSIDY PROGRAM**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), and KENNETH DONOHUE, Inspector General of the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development ("HUD"), announced that 30 individuals have been charged with defrauding the Section 8 program of over \$1 million in housing subsidies.

29 of the 30 individuals charged have been arrested this week; 1 remains at large. Each defendant is charged with theft of government funds and faces a sentence up to 10 years' imprisonment. Certain defendants are also charged with conspiracy to commit theft of government funds.

Section 8 is a major federal government program for helping low-income families to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Participants in the program are free to choose any housing that meets the program's requirements. Each month, a housing subsidy is paid directly to the landlord on behalf of the participating family, and that family pays the difference between the actual rent and the amount subsidized by Section 8.

Section 8 is funded by HUD and administered by the New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA"). NYCHA's Section 8 program is the largest in the United States, subsidizing the rent of 83,000 New York City families. Income limits for Section 8 are set by the federal government and vary depending on the number of people in a household. Program participants must re-certify each year to establish their continued eligibility.

The deliberate acts engaged in by these 30 defendants include: a Section 8 tenant who concealed her \$96,000 New York Stock Exchange salary income to obtain rent subsidies; Section 8 landlords who secretly resided with their Section 8 tenants while collecting rent subsidies for the apartments; and a Section 8 tenant who, while concealing her \$70,000 income to obtain rent subsidies, purchased a \$330,000 home in Pennsylvania.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative efforts of DOI's Office of the Inspector General for NYCHA, and the HUD Inspector General.

Mr. GARCIA added, "The city and federal governments, as well as the people they serve, have a vital interest in ensuring that federal funds for the Section 8 program go to those truly in need. My Office will continue to work with the Department of Investigation and HUD to ensure that those individuals who receive valuable Section 8 subsidies are eligible to participate in the program."

Ms. GILL HEARN stated, "These individuals are accused of defrauding the New York City housing authority's coveted Section 8 program through a variety of schemes. This investigation should serve as a reminder that scamming the government to get housing subsidies you're not entitled to isn't an option. The City and federal government will continue to vigilantly pursue those who pilfer funds designated for needy New Yorkers."

Mr. DONOHUE added, "Eligible New York City families wait for months -- sometimes years -- for a Section 8 rental subsidy, so I'm happy that the HUD Office of Inspector General's continued efforts to remove ineligible people are making room for the truly deserving families."

Assistant United States Attorneys TODD BLANCHE, JOHN CRONAN, JENNA DABBS, SHARON FRASE, ADAM HICKEY, RANDALL JACKSON, STEVE KWOK, MICHAEL MAIMIN, JULIAN MOORE, PARVIN MOYNE, BENJAMIN NAFTALIS, DAVID O'NEIL, KENNETH POLITE, LEE RENZIN, MICHAEL ROSENSAFT, and JOHN ZACH are in charge of these prosecutions.

The charges and allegations against the 30 individuals are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

LISTING OF DEFENDANTS CHARGED WITH SECTION 8 FRAUD

Defendants	Alleged Fraud Amount
ABRAHAM AIZENBERG and MARTIN GOLDSTEIN	\$87,116
MICHAEL BASILE and IRIS RIVERA	\$32,632
DWAYNE BOWENS	\$34,697
GWENDOLYN BROUGHTON (a/k/a GWENDOLYN BOOKER, a/k/a GWENDOLYN BROUGHTON-BOOKER, a/k/a GWENDOLYN BOOKER-CANTY)	\$17,808
SUZETTE GEORGE	\$36,553
KATRINA HAMILTON	\$46,878
LAURIE HARRIS	\$49,434
RAFAEL LEON	\$32,024
LUTICIA McCLARY	\$32,593
KAMELIA McGARRITY	\$57,568
DENISE MATTHEW (a/k/a DENISE HATCHER, a/k/a DENISE BURGESS)	\$86,751
DWAYNE MAYES	\$41,166
RADICA NARINE	\$12,906
JEWEL RUSSELL-OTERO and JOHNNY OTERO	\$116,106
WILLIE PACE	\$41,546
PERFFYS FRANCIS ROJAS	\$24,127
DEBBIE STUKES	\$22,685
ELISA SUAREZ (a/k/a ELISA MENDEZ, a/k/a ELISA SUAREZ MENDEZ, a/k/a MARIA ELISA MENDEZ), VERONICA SUAREZ, and VICTOR VIERA	\$80,549
ELIZABETH THEYENOT	\$23,384
SHAKISHA TRACY	\$56,338
CARMEN VARGAS	\$61,748
BEVERLY WILLIAMS	\$43,594

VICKY WRIGHT	\$51,582
CARMEN YOUNGS and GREGORY YOUNGS	\$61,112
TOTAL	\$1,150,897

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